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## Bridging the Gap: Design Education and the Realities of the Market



Concept note  
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In today's economy, design services hold significant value across various sectors, both in the public and private domain. Designers bring unique perspectives and skills that contribute to the success of organizations. However, the education of design has recently faced scrutiny, as the industry undergoes transformative changes and demands new skill sets to keep pace with emerging subfields and technologies like UI/UX and VR. The advent of AI technologies further adds to the uncertainty and challenges designers face. While some argue that self-learning and tutorials may suffice, a closer examination reveals the importance of formal design education in fostering soft skills, which are essential for a designer's holistic development.

Design education plays a vital role in providing a framework for students to practice and refine their soft skills. Through design critiques, student presentations, team projects, and deadlines, educational institutions create safe spaces for students to enhance their abilities in critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and collaboration. Universities have the responsibility of cultivating these skills by offering honest feedback sessions, one-on-one discussions, and structured reflection. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that design institutions should continuously evolve and amplify their efforts to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world expectations.

While alternative paths, such as online resources and experiential learning, exist for kickstarting a career in design, skipping formal education does not guarantee a comprehensive understanding of soft skills. Some design agencies may limit young designers' opportunities for growth and hinder their ability to present work or foster effective internal communication. In



contrast, universities provide a conducive environment for developing these crucial skills. However, it is evident that universities need to enhance their offerings by incorporating more resources and aligning curriculum with industry demands.

In the context of the Kingdom of Jordan, the significance of design education becomes even more pronounced. A [2012 study](#) conducted in Jordan highlighted several challenges hindering graduates of graphic design from entering the job market successfully. These challenges included a heavy focus on theoretical subjects, inadequate practical coursework, a gap between educational curricula and market requirements, a lack of experience and self-development opportunities, and deficiencies in critical thinking, creativity, communication, and technical skills. These findings emphasize the need for design education to adapt and address the evolving demands of the labor market.

To ensure a thriving design industry in Jordan, collaboration and consolidation of work, research, and initiatives in [labor market intelligence](#) (LMI) are essential. The responsibility of effectively utilizing LMI lies with the Ministry of Labor (MoL), which needs to foster partnerships, analyze labor market information, identify skill gaps, determine skill standards, and provide strategic advice to the government. Such efforts would enable Jordan to align educational programs with the needs of the industry, ensuring graduates possess the necessary skills to excel in the design market.

In conclusion, the education of design holds immense importance in shaping the market and working force, both globally and within the Kingdom of Jordan. By equipping designers with the necessary technical skills and fostering their soft skills, educational institutions play a critical role in preparing individuals to thrive in a rapidly changing industry. Collaboration between academia, industry, and government entities is crucial to bridge the gap between education and market demands, ensuring the design workforce remains competitive and innovative.

For more information and resources about IDare's Support CCI project can be found on our website:

<https://www.i-dare.org/CCI-Forum.html>

Best Wishes,  
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